

Red Hill, Smokehouse
Patrick Henry National Memorial
Brookneal Vicinity
Charlotte County
Virginia

HABS No. VA-1034-D

HABS
VA,
20-BROOK,
1-D-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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20-BR00
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

RED HILL - SMOKEHOUSE
(Patrick Henry National Memorial)

HAB5 No. A-1034-D

Location: Approximately 1.1 miles south of State Route 619, 5.3 miles south^{east} ~~west~~ of Brookneal, in Charlotte County, Virginia.

Present Owner/Occupant: Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation.

Significance: Red Hill was the final home and burial site of Patrick Henry (1736-99), prominent Revolutionary War and early national patriot, politician, orator, and lawyer. Henry was a leader in provoking and organizing resistance to British government of the colonies. He served as governor of Virginia five times in the 1770-80s, during the American Revolution and its aftermath, and led the opposition to ratifying the U.S. Constitution in Virginia in 1788. He thereafter withdrew from state politics and resumed a successful law practice. Henry occupied Red Hill from 1794 until 1799, the year of his death. Red Hill is a 1950s interpretation of a typical well-to-do eighteenth-century planter's home in Southside Virginia. While this building is alleged to represent the original Henry smokehouse, there is no evidence of how this dependency appeared. The present building resembles--in basic form, scale and materials--a typical eighteenth-century detached smokehouse.

In 1978 the U.S. Department of the Interior recognized Red Hill as a national landmark and entered the property in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1986 the property was designated a National Memorial to Patrick Henry by an act of Congress.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: The original Patrick Henry plantation was built at least by 1794; the much-altered and enlarged dwelling burned in February 1919. Reconstruction of the smokehouse was completed in 1956.
2. Architect: Stanhope Johnson designed the reconstruction.
3. Original plans and construction: A copy of Stanhope Johnson's 1956 reconstruction plans are on file in the Red Hill archives. All buildings at Red Hill date from the restoration/reconstruction.

- B. Historical Context: The eighteenth-century smokehouse dependency was an integral component to the self-sufficient Virginia plantation. In this small, utilitarian service building, meat, fowl, and fish were preserved so they could be stored and eaten over the winter months. For a general context, see Dwelling report.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION:

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a square plan with pyramidal roof and unfurnished, utilitarian interior.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Single-story, 10'-0" x 10'-0".
2. Foundations: Brick, laid in Flemish bond, with five exposed courses.
3. Walls: The walls are clad with lapped, beaded, horizontal weatherboard, with ca. 4-3/8" of exposure and cornermolding. Four small circular vents are evenly spaced along the top of the south wall of the building, each with a hole-punched grill covering.
4. Structural systems, framing: Wood frame.
5. Doorways, doors: The doorway on the west facade is reached via a flagstone path and single stone step. The single door is vertical board-and-batten construction. A wood dowel protrudes from the west facade adjacent to the door frame, about 5' above the foundation.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Pyramidal, covered with wood shingles and topped by a plain wood finial.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Boxed eaves with shingle and bed molding.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The interior is a single space, at the center of which is a firepit. Entry is gained through the west facade.
2. Flooring: Semi-dressed flagstone. The fire-pit is 60-0" x 60-0"; it drops 15-0" to a 6-0" stone shelf, and then drops another 12-0" to a flagstone floor.
3. Wall, ceiling finish: Unfinished frame, with exposed joists and rafters. A grid composed of five 2" by 4" beams, spaced about 12" on center, with meat-hooks set into the interstices, comprises the ceiling.

4. Hardware: The cast-iron box lock and door hinges were made by James Peterson and Sons of Philadelphia. Twenty-five meat hooks are set into the ceiling timbers. A cast-iron boot scraper is located by the entry. A decoratively turned post, located north of the door, features a hook designed to catch and hold open the door.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The smokehouse is southeast of the dwelling with the entrance on its west facade. It is the third in a row of dependencies that are linearly perpendicular to the ridgeline and orientation of the dwelling; to the east is a lawn and garden area, and the cemetery. North of the smokehouse is the privy, to the south is the slave cabin.
2. Outbuildings: Besides the smokehouse, the estate includes the dwelling and five primary outbuildings that are described in individual reports: addendum to law office, VA-1034-A; kitchen, VA-1034-C; privy, VA-1034-E; stables and carriage house, VA-1034-F; and slave cabin, VA-1034-G.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION: See Dwelling report, VA-1034-B.